



Phase II and Phase III Archeological Database and Inventory

Site Number: 18CV362

Site Name: Ashcomb's Quarter & Awapantop

Prehistoric ☒

Other name(s) F-1

Historic ☒

Unknown ☐

Brief Description:

mid-17th and early 18th century rural domestic site, Late Archaic through Late Woodland hamlet/shell midden

Site Location and Environmental Data:

Latitude 38.3439 Longitude -76.4759

Elevation m Site slope 0-2%

Site setting

-Site Setting restricted

-Lat/Long accurate to within 1 sq. mile, user may need to make slight adjustments in mapping to account for sites near state/county lines or streams

Maryland Archeological Research Unit No. 9

SCS soil & sediment code MfA

Physiographic province Western Shore Coastal

Terrestrial site ☒

Underwater site ☐

Ethnobotany profile available ☒ Maritime site ☐

Nearest Surface Water

Name (if any) Patuxent River

Saltwater

Ocean ☐

Estuary/tidal river ☒

Tidewater/marsh ☐

Spring ☐

Minimum distance to water is 10 m

Freshwater

Stream/river ☐

Swamp ☐

Lake or pond ☐

Temporal & Ethnic Contextual Data:

Paleoindian site ☐

Woodland site ☐

Archaic site ☐

MD Adena ☐

Early archaic ☐

Early woodland ☒

Middle archaic ☐

Mid. woodland ☒

Late archaic ☒

Late woodland ☒

Unknown prehistoric context ☐

Contact period site ☐

ca. 1820 - 1860 ☐

ca. 1630 - 1675 ☐

ca. 1860 - 1900 ☐

ca. 1675 - 1720 ☒

ca. 1900 - 1930 ☐

ca. 1720 - 1780 ☒

Post 1930 ☐

ca. 1780 - 1820 ☐

Unknown historic context ☐

Unknown context ☐

Ethnic Associations (historic only)

Native American ☐

Asian American ☐

African American ☒

Unknown ☐

Anglo-American ☒

Other ☐

Hispanic ☐

Y=Confirmed, P=Possible

Site Function Contextual Data:

Historic

Urban/Rural? Rural ☒

Domestic

Homestead ☒

Farmstead ☐

Mansion ☐

Plantation ☐

Row/townhome ☐

Cellar ☐

Privy ☐

Industrial

Mining-related ☐

Quarry-related ☐

Mill ☐

Black/metalsmith ☐

Furnace/forge ☐

Other ☐

Transportation

Canal-related ☐

Road/railroad ☐

Wharf/landing ☐

Maritime-related ☐

Bridge ☐

Ford ☐

Educational

Commercial

Trading post ☐

Store ☐

Tavern/inn ☐

Military

Battlefield ☐

Fortification ☐

Encampment ☐

Townsite

Religious

Church/mtg house ☐

Ch support bldg ☐

Burial area

Cemetery ☐

Sepulchre ☐

Isolated burial ☐

Bldg or foundation ☒

Possible Structure ☐

Post-in-ground ☒

Frame-built ☐

Masonry ☐

Other structure ☐

Slave related

Non-domestic agri ☐

Recreational

Midden/dump ☒

Artifact scatter ☒

Spring or well ☐

Unknown ☐

Other context ☐

Interpretive Sampling Data:

Prehistoric context samples

Soil samples taken ☒

Flotation samples taken ☒

Other samples taken faunal, oyster, phys.anth

Historic context samples

Soil samples taken ☒

Flotation samples taken ☒

Other samples taken faunal, oyster



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Diagnostic Artifact Data:

Projectile Point Types	
Clovis	<input type="text"/>
Hardaway-Dalton	<input type="text"/>
Palmer	<input type="text"/>
Kirk (notch)	<input type="text"/>
Kirk (stem)	<input type="text"/>
Le Croy	<input type="text"/>
Morrow Mntn	<input type="text"/>
Guilford	<input type="text"/>
Brewerton	<input type="text"/>
Otter Creek	<input type="text"/>
Koens-Crispin	<input type="text"/>
Perkiomen	<input type="text"/>
Susquehanna	<input type="text"/>
Vernon	<input type="text"/>
Piscataway	<input type="text"/>
Calvert	<input type="text"/>
Selby Bay	<input type="text"/>
Jacks Rf (notch)	<input type="text"/>
Jacks Rf (pent)	<input type="text"/>
Madison/Potomac	<input type="text"/>
Levanna	<input type="text"/>

Prehistoric Sherd Types

Marcey Creek	<input type="text"/>	Popes Creek	<input type="text"/>	Shepard	<input type="text"/>	Keyser	<input type="text"/>
Dames Qtr	<input type="text"/>	Coulbourn	<input type="text"/>	Townsend	<input type="text"/>	Yeocomico	<input type="text"/>
Selden Island	<input type="text"/>	Watson	<input type="text"/>	Minguanan	<input type="text"/>	Monongahela	<input type="text"/>
Accokeek	<input type="text"/>	Mockley	<input type="text"/>	Sullivan Cove	<input type="text"/>	Susquehannock	<input type="text"/>
Wolfe Neck	<input type="text"/>	Clemson Island	<input type="text"/>	Shenks Ferry	<input type="text"/>		
Vinette	<input type="text"/>	Page	<input type="text"/>	Moyaone	<input type="text"/>		
				Potomac Cr	<input type="text"/>		

Historic Sherd Types

Earthenware		Ironstone	<input type="text"/>	Staffordshire	<input type="text"/>	Stoneware	
Astbury	<input type="text"/>	Jackfield	<input type="text"/>	Tin Glazed	<input type="text"/>	English Brown	<input type="text"/>
Borderware	<input type="text"/>	Mn Mottled	<input type="text"/>	Whiteware	<input type="text"/>	Eng Dry-bodie	<input type="text"/>
Buckley	<input type="text"/>	North Devon	<input type="text"/>	Porcelain	<input type="text"/>	Nottingham	<input type="text"/>
Creamware	<input type="text"/>	Pearlware	<input type="text"/>			Rhenish	<input type="text"/>
						Wt Salt-glazed	<input type="text"/>

All quantities exact or estimated minimal counts

Other Artifact & Feature Types:

Prehistoric Artifacts	
Flaked stone	<input type="text"/>
Ground stone	<input type="text"/>
Stone bowls	<input type="text"/>
Fire-cracked rock	<input type="text"/>
Other lithics (all)	<input type="text"/>
Ceramics (all)	<input type="text"/>
Rimsherds	<input type="text"/>
Other fired clay	<input type="text"/>
Human remain(s)	<input type="text"/>
Modified faunal	<input type="text"/>
Unmod faunal	<input type="text"/>
Oyster shell	<input type="text"/>
Floral material	<input type="text"/>
Uncommon Obj.	<input type="text"/>
Other	<input type="text"/>

Prehistoric Features

Mound(s)	<input type="text"/>	Storage/trash pit	<input type="text"/>
Midden	<input type="text"/>	Burial(s)	<input type="text"/>
Shell midden	<input type="text"/>	Ossuary	<input type="text"/>
Postholes/molds	<input type="text"/>	Unknown	<input type="text"/>
House pattern(s)	<input type="text"/>	Other	<input type="text"/>
Palisade(s)	<input type="text"/>		
Hearth(s)	<input type="text"/>		
Lithic reduc area	<input type="text"/>		

Lithic Material

Jasper	<input type="text"/>	Chalcedony	<input type="text"/>	European flint	<input type="text"/>
Chert	<input type="text"/>	Ironstone	<input type="text"/>	Basalt	<input type="text"/>
Rhyolite	<input type="text"/>	Argilite	<input type="text"/>	Unknown	<input type="text"/>
Quartz	<input type="text"/>	Steatite	<input type="text"/>	Other	<input type="text"/>
Quartzite	<input type="text"/>	Sandstone	<input type="text"/>		

☒ Dated features present at site

17th & 18th C. features w/ diagnostic artifacts; a C-14 dated shell pit overlying a prehistoric burial

Historic Artifacts	
Pottery (all)	<input type="text"/>
Glass (all)	<input type="text"/>
Architectural	<input type="text"/>
Furniture	<input type="text"/>
Arms	<input type="text"/>
Clothing	<input type="text"/>
Personal items	<input type="text"/>
Tobacco related	<input type="text"/>
Activity item(s)	<input type="text"/>
Human remain(s)	<input type="text"/>
Faunal material	<input type="text"/>
Misc. kitchen	<input type="text"/>
Floral material	<input type="text"/>
Misc.	<input type="text"/>
Other	<input type="text"/>

Historic Features

Const feature	<input type="text"/>	Privy/outhouse	<input type="text"/>	Depression/mound	<input type="text"/>	Unknown	<input type="text"/>
Foundation	<input type="text"/>	Well/cistern	<input type="text"/>	Burial(s)	<input type="text"/>	Other	<input type="text"/>
Cellar hole/cellar	<input type="text"/>	Trash pit/dump	<input type="text"/>	Railroad bed	<input type="text"/>		
Hearth/chimney	<input type="text"/>	Sheet midden	<input type="text"/>	Earthworks	<input type="text"/>		
Postholes/molds	<input type="text"/>	Planting feature	<input type="text"/>	Mill raceway	<input type="text"/>		
Paling ditch/fence	<input type="text"/>	Road/walkway	<input type="text"/>	Wheel pit	<input type="text"/>		

All quantities exact or estimated minimal counts

Radiocarbon Data:

Sample 1: 470 +/- 80 years BP Reliability High Sample 2: +/- years BP Reliability Sample 3: +/- years BP Reliability

B-122141: charcoal from base of shell pit covering burial (Feat-69), assoc. w/ Yeocomico sherds, shell, and human remains

Sample 4: +/- years BP Reliability Sample 5: +/- years BP Reliability Sample 6: +/- years BP Reliability

Sample 7: +/- years BP Reliability Sample 8: +/- years BP Reliability Sample 9: +/- years BP Reliability

☐ Additional radiocarbon results available



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External Samples/Data:

Collection curated at MAC

☐ Additional raw data may be available online

Summary Description:

Site 18CV362 (also known as Site F-1) is a multi-component prehistoric and mid 17th to early 18th century domestic site on property managed by the Naval Air Station (NAS) - Patuxent near the confluence of the Patuxent River and the Chesapeake Bay in southern Calvert County, Maryland. The prehistoric component of the site has been referred to as Awapantop (the Nanticoke word for "bald eagle") and includes deposits dating from Late Archaic through Late Woodland times, including extensive shell midden deposits and a Woodland hamlet. The historic/colonial deposits are referred to as "Ashcomb's Quarter", with the principal archeological deposits dating to the period from AD 1650-1730. The site is situated on a bluff overlooking the Patuxent and when first discovered, it was located in the grassy lawn area of a campground and mobile home/RV park. Macadem driveways pass through the area. A spring-fed ravine is situated on the west end of the site. This ravine has been partially filled through slope wash precipitated by plowing, and also through purposeful activities. Original forest cover probably included a variety of hardwoods, such as white oak, chestnut, hickory, walnut, cherry, and ash. Soils at the site are Matapeake silt loams.

The area of the site has been intensively occupied since the 17th century and alterations to the landscape have been extensive. Clearing of native vegetation, repeated plowing, and erosion associated with over 3 centuries of agriculture have mixed the upper soil layers in many areas and truncated them in others. Further disturbances resulted from a "summer" subdivision developed by local realtors in the 1920s and the subsequent acquisition and development as a training facility by the US Navy in 1942 have also contributed to mixed soil profiles. The property has been used in modern times as a recreation center (known as the Naval Recreation Center – Solomons) and contains housing facilities, camping sites, parking lots, a pavilion, clubhouse, swimming pool complex, a fishing pier, rest rooms, laundry rooms, maintenance buildings, and both paved and gravel roads.

The site was first identified in 1995 during the course of a Phase I survey of the Naval Recreation Center – Solomons (NRC Solomons) property which was an annex to the NAS – Patuxent River. Previous historical work had suggested that the annex property had a high potential for containing cultural resources eligible for listing on the National Register. The survey of the annex property was executed because of the Navy's cultural resource responsibilities under Section 106 of the NHPA.

The site was identified through shovel test pitting (STPs). Shovel tests were placed in a grid pattern across the area at a 15.24 m (50 ft) interval initially, which was later reduced to a 7.62 m (25 ft) interval once it was apparent that potentially significant cultural materials were present. Ultimately, 47 STPs would be excavated within the boundaries of 18CV362. The site appeared to cover an area 30.5 m (100 ft) wide by 46 m (150 ft) long along the west-facing bluff overlooking the Patuxent. Each STP measured approximately 30.5 cm (1 ft) in diameter and was excavated into culturally-sterile subsoil or until 91.4 cm (36 in) deep. Selected pits were deepened with a split spoon probe and/or bucket auger to assess stratigraphy and search for buried A soil horizons beyond the reach of hand excavation. All soils were screened through hardware cloth.

Plowzone soils were found to range between 21.3 cm to 54.9 cm in thickness, and the plowzone was noted to be present in the eastern and central portions of the site. The western portion of the site contained the remnants of a colluvial and alluvial soil-filled ravine. The site revealed two artifact concentrations with a scattering of oyster shell fragments and a few colonial artifacts linking the two. Historic artifacts dated from the 18th and 19th centuries, generally concentrated at the eastern and western ends of the site.

A total of 835 historic artifacts and 1 prehistoric artifact (a fragment of debitage) were recovered during the Phase I project. This was primarily a light-density colonial deposit, with a 19th century component present as well. An oyster shell lens was also encountered at the interface of plowzone and subsoil (35-38 cm below surface), suggesting the presence of a possible domestic midden. The full historic assemblage consisted of 759 architectural artifacts (737 brick and building materials, 1 wrought nail, 8 cut nails, 13 wire nails), 73 kitchen-related artifacts (4 miscellaneous earthenware sherds, 2 Rhenish stoneware sherds, 1 whiteware sherd, 1 Colonial glass, 15 bottle fragments, and 50 pieces of shell), and 3 white clay tobacco pipe fragments. Based on these findings, researchers recommended that the site be avoided when considering future improvement and construction projects at NRC Solomons.

Phase II testing was carried out at 18CV362 in the winter of 1996-1997. The work was conducted because the US Navy was proposing to construct various new facilities within NRC Solomons and was undertaking shoreline stabilization procedures in the immediate vicinity of the site. The construction would impact both 18CV361 (see associated synopsis report) and 18CV362. In order to ensure that the proposed construction activities did not adversely affect any cultural resources eligible for listing in the NRHP, the Maryland Historical Trust requested a Phase II study be performed on each site.

Phase II fieldwork at 18CV362 consisted of the hand-excavation of ten 1.5 X 1.5 m test units. Test units were placed to provide the greatest within-site coverage as well as sample both high and low probability site areas. The placement of individual test units was selective, and guided by in-field assessments of topographic setting, Phase I artifact distributions and shovel test location, and site stratigraphic character. Unit excavations proceeded in arbitrary 10 cm levels in areas lacking natural stratigraphic development. In areas possessing definable strata, natural levels or a combination of natural and arbitrary excavation levels were used. Subsoil was sampled via the excavation of a 75 X 75 cm quadrant of each test unit. All excavated soils were screened through hardware cloth, and all recovered artifacts were retained for analysis. Unit and level descriptive notes, profile and planview illustrations, and photographs were produced to document natural and cultural traits of the excavated locations.

The Phase II testing indicated that the site contained a substantial prehistoric component as well, at the time, believed to be confined to the plowzone or colluvial/alluvial soils in the ravine. There was significant evidence that construction activities had resulted in a deposit of gravel/fill across the site. In general, however, an historic period occupation was in evidence, producing domestic artifacts from as early as the mid-1700s (pipestem diameters and pearlware dates) to as late as the mid 1900s (wire nails and whiteware). The site appears to have a predominance of utilitarian type ceramic material, mixed in with a small amount of finer serving type dish material. Architectural debris (brick, mortar, etc.) suggested the presence of a structure, probably a habitation.

Prehistoric artifacts recovered during the course of Phase II work included 53 flaked stone objects (5 biface/preform fragments and 48 pieces of debitage), 4 pieces of fire-cracked rock, an incomplete winged bannerstone, and 2 grit-tempered ceramic sherds. The recovered assemblage was strongly dominated by quartz, with local pebble chert varieties and a single specimen of quartzite making up the remainder of the flaked stone objects. Some of the material was recovered from what appeared to be a buried A horizon in the ravine area.

Historic artifacts recovered during Phase II work include 492 architectural artifacts (37 brick, 10 mortar, 12 shingles, 4 window glass, 219 cut nails, 122



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Unknown ☐

unidentified nails, and 88 pieces of metal hardware), 451 kitchen-related artifacts (16 miscellaneous earthenware sherds, 14 pearlware sherds, 6 porcelain sherds, 10 miscellaneous stoneware sherds, 13 whiteware sherds, 207 redware sherds, 147 bottle/jar glass fragments, and 38 shell/bone fragments), 62 tobacco-related objects (43 pipe stems and 19 pipe bowls), and 74 miscellaneous/unidentified objects. Despite evidence of disturbance and filling, the presence of potentially well-preserved artifact-bearing deposits in some areas of the site was considered to be sufficient evidence that the site is National Register eligible. Based on these findings, Phase III data recovery was recommended.

Phase III data recovery was carried out in 1997. At that time, the Navy planned to stabilize the Patuxent River bank in the vicinity of 18CV362, an action which would result in the destruction of the site. As part of the Phase III background work, extensive archival research was conducted on the site.

Archival research reveals that 18CV362 was probably originally part of a 75-acre tract called "Compton" surveyed for an Ishmael Wright in the summer of 1651. The Wrights, Ishmael and his wife Ann, were Quakers. They would eventually sell their interest in the land on 13 January 1656 to Antoine LeCompte, a French Huguenot. At the time of the sale the tract, identified as "upon Point Patience lying between the plantation of John Ashcombe and William Stephens," had "lately been in the tenure of Henry Bullen and Alexander Mayrobe", and included improvements such as a dwelling house, fruit trees, and timber. It is not known whether LeCompte ever took up residence at Compton, but based on the facts that he was living on the eastern shore in the 1660s, it is likely that he continued the operation of the property as a tenancy.

Little documentary record survives for the Compton tract from 1658 until 1684, by which time the land was owned by John Ashcomb. Ashcomb owned the neighboring 360 acre "Point Patience" tract that bordered Compton to the south and southwest. John Ashcomb and his family had arrived in Maryland in 1651. The Point Patience Tract was granted to Ashcomb from Lord Baltimore in 1649, and surveyed in the summer of 1651 (as was Compton).

By the fall of 1651, Ashcomb was the successful plaintiff in a case against his neighbor Ishmael Wright, accusing Wright of having the colony's surveyors alter the property line between Wright's and Ashcomb's tracts by cutting down the marked trees that served as datum points.

John Ashcomb died in August 1684, leaving a 650 acre tract called West Ashcomb and ½ of the Compton parcel to his eldest son Charles, and the other half of Compton to his youngest son Samuel. For Charles to inherit any land or estate at all, it was stipulated in his father's will that Charles must "return into this province to inhabit and settle himself upon the said land". To his second son, Nathaniel (I), John left the Point Patience tract. Ashcomb's labor force by 1684 was apparently composed primarily of enslaved Africans, and he left to Charles four "Negroes, that is to say, on man called Peter, one woman called Colly, one boy called Robin, and one girl called Moll: He divided up his other slaves among the other two sons. By 1686, both of Charles' brothers would be dead and Charles would eventually obtain his brother Samuel's portion of Compton. Nathaniel (I) would leave Point Patience (on which he was dwelling) to his wife Mary.

By the start of the 18th century, the meager documentary record indicates that Mary Ashcomb and her children occupied the 360 acre Point Patience tract. Close by to the east, the 75 acre Compton tract was owned, but probably not occupied by, brother-in-law Charles Ashcomb. In the summer of 1701, Mary Ashcomb willed the Point Patience land, with dwelling house, servants, and slaves, to her daughters for a period of 8 years, after which time the tract would pass to her son Nathaniel (II). According to her will, should Nathaniel (II) die without heirs before age 20, then the land would revert to her daughters. This clause in the will was to cause inheritance difficulties half-a-century later.

Nathaniel (II) was apparently able to reach maturity and take possession of the Point Patience parcel. It appears that difficulties with the boundaries between his uncle's lands and his own resulted in the survey of a 19 acre parcel called "Addition" which was patented on 10 September, 1716. Nathaniel's uncle Charles Ashcomb, the owner of Compton, was living on the Eastern Shore by the time of his death in 1702. In his will, he left the Compton tract, which he referred to as "My Quarter". At the time of his death, his children were still minors and the will provided for the management of his properties until the children reached majority. An undated rent roll for Compton indicates that at one time the parcel was in the possession of either a "John Dorsey" or "John Dansey" for Charles' (I) orphans. Thus, it appears that the Compton parcel could have been tenanted property at the beginning of the 18th century. However, Charles' (I) wife Martha was re-married to a man named John Dansey by at least 1707. It is possible that the rent rolls are not recording a tenant at Compton, but instead a familial obligation to administer the Ashcomb children's estate.

The archival record indicates that the Ashcomb family was closely tied to the Parran family through marriage. The Parrans were a wealthy and landed Calvert County family and many of the parcels that they owned have names such as "Ashcombs Purchase" and "Ashcombs Inclosure". The Parran/Ashcomb family would possess the Point Pateince Tract for the majority of the first half of the 18th century. In 1748, a Provincial Court Ejectment case was brought against the Parran family by a James Somervell, who evidently had purchased the property from Nathaniel Ashcomb (II) in 1719, according to the rent roll for Calvert County in that year. Samuel Ashcomb, Charles' son and the previous owner of Compton (see below), sent his power-of-attorney, to testify in the case. Ultimately, Somervell proved his case and the county sheriff was ordered to deliver the lands to Somervell.

Regardless of the outcome of the ejectment case, Calvert County debt books for the period 1753-1774 reveal that an Alexander Parran and his wife Mary (Ashcomb) Parran were legally considered to be the owners of the 360 acre Point Patience and 19 acre Addition properties. To the east, the 1753-1758 rent roll records that a Margaret Rawlings was the person in possession of the 75 acre Compton parcel on which 18CV362 site. A local merchant and miller named Daniel Rawlings had acquired a tract called "Rawlings Purchase" in 1745 that was described as bounding on the Point Patience land and Ashcoms Creek. This tract probably included the Compton parcel. Following Daniel's death in March 1759, a Margaret Rawlings (either Daniel's widow or daughter of the same name) married Benjamin Parran in September of that same year, again uniting the Point Patience, Addition, and Compton parcels within the hands of a single family.

The Parrans owned an extensive estate along the Patuxent and ran a diversified plantation that employed the labor of numerous slaves. An inventory made in 1765 lists 137 barrels of corn, 56 bushels of wheat, and smaller amounts of buckwheat, beans, and peas. The livestock herd was large, including 54 sheep, 19 cows and calves, a large number of pigs, 2 boars, 1 yoke of large steers, 16 turkeys, 15 ducks, and 4 geese. The Parran family name would remain associated with the area throughout the 19th and 20th centuries.

Phase III data recovery investigations at 18CV362 began with the establishment of a site grid, laid out as closely as possible to the grid used during Phase II work. Unfortunately, although the surface evidence of backfilled test units was apparent, the original datum point used for the Phase II investigations was not located, so at least a minimal degree of error was introduced in establishing the grid.

A total of thirty-seven Phase III 1.524 X 1.524 m (5 X 5 ft) excavation units were laid out and excavated on the re-established grid system. Unit locations were



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chosen to complement the locations of Phase II test units. In addition to the 37 Phase III units, one Phase II unit was re-excavated, primarily to observe complex soil stratigraphy noted there. During the course of continuing the excavation of that unit (located in the ravine area) prehistoric pottery and lithics were recovered and a possible hearth feature was discovered at the base of one level. Due to the presence of deeply buried in-situ prehistoric artifacts and a possible feature, additional Phase III investigations into the prehistoric component of 18CV362 were undertaken. When combined with the Phase II test units, this represents an approximately 4.8% sample of the total site area. Phase III units were hand-excavated to the bottom of the plowzone and the soil matrices were screened through hardware cloth. Standardized forms were used to record depth measurements, soil textures and colors, artifact content, and general observations. Profiles and plan views of the excavation units were not rendered during this phase of the field investigations, and feature identification waited until the plowzone soils were mechanically stripped.

Upon completion of the 1.524 X 1.524 m test units, the plowzone soils across the site were mechanically stripped using a Gradall with a toothless bucket. The limits of the area to be stripped consisted initially of three distinct areas, but following the discovery of the intact prehistoric component, a fourth area was added in the ravine area. Stripped areas were shovel skimmed and troweled to remove and residual plowzone soils and to identify and define subsurface features revealed following the stripping. Features were essentially marked and mapped in plan view at this stage. A total of 67 features were identified, mapped, and recorded at 18CV362.

After the mechanical stripping and following the identification of features, a sample of 36 features (34 historic and 2 prehistoric) were excavated. Features were excavated according to natural stratigraphy, or in 7.62 cm (3 in) arbitrary levels in thicker strata. Feature soils were screened through hardware cloth. Soil samples of at least one liter were retained from selected proveniences for water-screening or flotation. Narrative field notes, feature profiles and plan views, and photographs (color and black-and-white), were produced of the features to document the results of the field investigations. At least 23 square meters of the previously identified feature at 18CV362 (the trash-filled buried ravine) were excavated to sterile subsoil and examined by a geomorphology specialist.

Overall, three structures (designated Structure 1-3) were delineated, along with a large historic-period shell midden (Feature 13), two debris-filled pits (Features 16 and 22), a 20th Century pipe trench (Feature 26), the trash-filled ravine bordering the western edge of the site (sampled by 10 excavation units) and numerous other cultural features.

Each of the three structures appears to be post-in-ground structures focused around the remnants of the spring-fed ravine presently filled with colluvial and alluvial sediments. At the time of the earliest European settlement of the Point Patience region circa AD 1650, the ravine probably still provided a means of access between the shore and the uplands. The contemporaneous shore would have been a considerable distance shoreward of its modern position. Structure 1 is interpreted as the archeological traces of a tobacco barn measuring 3.05 X 6.1 m (10 X 20 ft). The relatively close spacing of the posts (about 1.5 to 1.8 m apart) is characteristic of tobacco barn construction in southern Maryland. The remains of a second structure (Structure 2) was postulated just to the south of Structure 1. No clear evidence of a hearth, fireplace, or chimney was found for structure 2, suggesting that it did not serve a domestic function. But otherwise, there is little that reveals the function of the structure. Structure 3, situated to the west of the other two buildings and just east of the trash-filled ravine, represents the remains of a two-bay (possibly 3-bay) post-in-ground structure with a possible dairy/cooling pit and possible hearth attached.

Feature 13 was a roughly rectangular shell midden with several associated features. The feature strongly resembled a prehistoric shell midden, however, a number of historic artifacts were recovered from the soil matrix which place the features in the same date range as the aforementioned structures. The function and/or use of Feature 13 and its associated features is not known. Some internal evidence suggests that it may have been a tree fall hole that was subsequently used for trash. The feature's location close to the Patuxent River bluff makes further interpretation difficult, since much of the area to the north (river side) has been eroded away.

Two trash filled pits (Features 16 and 22), probably used for daub, were just at the beginning of the western slope of the ravine. Feature 16 was irregular in shape and fill contained charcoal, shell, animal bone, historic ceramics, nails, a gunflint, prehistoric ceramics, and fire-cracked rock in a relatively consistent soil matrix. Several pockets of subsoil were incorporated in some areas and oyster shell declined with depth. A posthole and postmold were found in the southern portion of the feature. Feature 22 was directly west of Feature 16, less than 30 cm to the west. This pit was elliptical in shape and extended just over 30 cm in depth. The surface of the feature contained bone, fish scales, oyster shells, tobacco pipe fragments, historic ceramics, wrought nails, and prehistoric ceramics. Artifact quantities dropped off with depth and a possible iron kettle fragment or hoe blade remnant was found in the fill. Additional features were encountered, but their functions are very uncertain.

Overall, the archeological evidence suggests that the site was an "out-plantation" or tenanted farm complex, in all likelihood peopled by both slave and free. At Ashcomb's Quarter, unlike other documented slave quarters in the Chesapeake, there is a relatively high number of ceramic vessels in the assemblage, and the site yielded fragments of continental glass, not necessarily a low-status item. The presence of tubular beads for personal adornment (necklace and/or hairnet), furniture hardware, and other personal items, suggests that the site may not have been occupied solely by enslaved African Americans, but may have been the farmstead of indentured servants. While no obvious domestic dwelling was discovered, the presence of a tobacco barn and other outbuildings suggests that the site was intensively occupied and used.

The historical and archeological data indicates that the major portion of the site's features dates to the early 18th Century, coinciding with the ownership of the site by Charles Ashcomb around 1702 until around 1730. The site was likely not occupied by Ashcomb himself or his family, but by tenants and/or enslaved African Americans. Structural evidence indicates that the buildings at Ashcomb's Quarter were not rebuilt, replaced, or maintained, suggesting a relatively short-term occupation.

The artifact assemblage recovered included a large number of tobacco pipes of the period 1710-1750, local and imported ceramics dating from the end of the 17th through the early 18th centuries, and a large assemblage of faunal remains. In addition, there is also archeological evidence (particularly early ceramics and tobacco pipes), recovered from within the deep ravine and in the plowzone units of the earlier, circa 1650-1660 initial settlement of the tract known as Compton.

The full Phase III historic assemblage included 1 activity item (a lead bale seal), 2,574 architectural artifacts, 2 clothing items (a brass buckle and an iron buckle), 2 furniture items (a brass upholstery tack and a piece of early 18th century brass furniture hardware), 6,664 kitchen-related artifacts, 2 personal items (Cornaline d' Aleppo beads), 307 tobacco-related artifacts (302 kaolin pipe bowl/stem fragments and 5 red clay pipe bowl/stem fragments), and 88 miscellaneous objects (1 piece of wood, 81 pieces of charcoal, and 6 coal fragments). The architectural assemblage consisted of 764 brick fragments, 61 mortar fragments, 835 pieces of daub, 10 pieces of window glass, a lead window came fragment, 899 nails (155 wrought, 606 cut, and 138 unidentified), a



Phase II and Phase III Archeological Database and Inventory

Site Number: 18CV362

Site Name: Ashcomb's Quarter & Awapantop

Prehistoric ☒

Other name(s) F-1

Historic ☒

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mid-17th and early 18th century rural domestic site, Late Archaic through Late Woodland hamlet/shell midden

Unknown ☐

piece of brass hardware, a piece of lead hardware, and 2 miscellaneous architectural objects. The kitchen-related assemblage includes 850 ceramic sherds (62 Buckley, 70 North Devon, 5 possible Borderware, 241 tin-glazed earthenware, 24 Staffordshire slipware, 24 creamware, 5 pearlware, 4 early porcelain, 5 hard-paste porcelain, 59 chalky-paste earthenware, 22 buff-bodied earthenware, 1 coarse earthenware, 30 white salt-glazed stoneware, 27 imported gray stoneware, 16 imported brown stoneware, 3 domestic stoneware, 1 red stoneware, 239 redware, and 12 unidentified sherds), 162 glass fragments (125 olive bottle glass, 9 aqua bottle glass, 12 clear bottle glass, 1 dark green bottle glass, and 15 Continental amber glass), and 5,652 faunal remains (950 animal bones, 4,207 oyster shell fragments, 15 clam shells, 76 unidentified shell fragments, and 404 fish bone/scale fragments).

The faunal component of the kitchen assemblage was subjected to additional analysis, in order to obtain as much information as possible about the diet of the inhabitants of Ashcomb's Quarter. Mammals dominated the Ashcomb's Quarter component assemblage in terms of MNI (at least 12 individuals), and estimated meat quantity (91.3%). Domestic mammals, followed by fish and wild mammals are the three most significant contributors to the meat portion of the diet. The results of this analysis suggest that the early 18th century residents at the site consumed primarily beef (58%), followed by pork (20.5%), fish (10.5%), deer (7.3%), raccoons (1.4%), mutton/goat (0.9%), turtles (0.4%), and wild or domestic birds (0.1%). The assemblage of oyster shells suggests that they were recovered from a wide range of environment (differing salinity regimes).

In addition to the artifacts described above, ethnobotanical remains were recovered from 9 flotation samples recovered from five of the historic period features. The historic features investigated included a probable hearth (Feature 17), a shell midden feature (Feature 13), and pits filled with debris (Features 16, 22, and 43). Two of these, Features 22 and 43, appear to have been utilized for trash disposal during the late summer through the early fall. An analysis of oyster shell from Feature 16 reinforces the archeobotanical data, indicating that the feature contained shells harvested in the spring until early summer, and again in the fall.

Maize is identified in 75% of the historic features. Barley caryopses are the only evidence of Old World grains at the site, and cowpea and common bean legumes were found in the historic features. Maize, beans, and curcubits were found in association with barley and cowpea in Feature 16, indicating a blending of Old and New World agriculture. Dropseed was found, as was strawberry. Herbaceous weeds were found in ¾ of the Ashcomb's Quarter component features, including goosefoot, jimsonweed, pokeweed, and wood sorrel. Wood charcoal dominates the assemblages from all of the historic features, and including hardwoods and softwoods. Overall, the majority of identifiable woods were either oak (37%), elm or hackberry (11%), or pine (16%). Sixteen genera of tree species were identified, and of these 14 are hardwoods and 2 are conifers. Additional details can be found in the linked ethnobotany profile.

As stated previously, original research designs had to be altered during data recovery because of the discovery of an unexpected and substantial prehistoric component buried under the historic component in the filled-in ravine area. The prehistoric component had retained integrity because it was buried by erosion and was thereby protected from disturbance by plowing and other historic activities. It appeared to represent a poorly known site type (unexpected at this time and location): a Late Woodland hamlet, occupied by one or two families who farmed the surrounding land. Such sites are unexpected here, because the early English explorer John Smith commented that the people of the Patuxent lived consolidated in villages unlike the more dispersed settlements elsewhere. Additional prehistoric components, dating back all the way to Late Archaic times, would ultimately be uncovered as well.

The archeological evidence of the prehistoric component at 18CV362, Awapantop, suggests that the site was occupied repeatedly between about 3,000 BC and AD 1640. Several diagnostic points, as well as a bannerstone fragment, indicate Late Archaic and Terminal Archaic occupation. Early Woodland to early Middle Woodland occupation is attested by a Piscataway point and a possible Calvert point, as well as a single Popes Creek-like sherd. A few Mockley sherds and a Stony Creek/Accokey stamped sherd indicate some later Middle Woodland occupation, although there are no diagnostic Selby Bay projectile points from this period. Two small Rappahannock Incised sherds are the only indicators for the earlier part of the Late Woodland period (AD 900-1300). The later part of the Late Woodland is represented by sherds of several wares: Yeocomico, Sullivan, Rappahannock Fabric Impressed, Townsend Corded Horizontal, probably Potomac Creek, and possibly Moyaone or Camden. Yeocomico Plain sherds comprise the great majority at the site, suggesting the most intense use of this location occurred around AD 1500-1640.

Two prehistoric features were encountered during the course of the Phase III operations at 18CV362. The first was a small shell heap or midden (Feature 68), roughly 2 x 1.5 m in size. Due to the shell's alkaline content, associated bone fragments (mainly bird, but also a small amount of mammalian bone) were well preserved. The midden also contained numerous sherds of prehistoric pottery, some lithic flakes cores, hammerstones, and fire-cracked rock. Near the top of the shell deposits, a few historic-period artifacts were recovered, including a cut nail, a heavily weathered fragment of bottle glass, and 2 glazed ceramic sherds. The other feature encountered was the possible hearth feature identified at the outset of the Phase III project. This had been noted in the corner of the re-excavated Phase II ravine unit (see above). A ca. 91 cm X 91 cm (3 X 3 ft) area was troweled, exposing the outline of a small shell-filled pit (Feature 69). Continued troweling at the southern edge of this feature resulted in the discovery of a human mandible fragment.

The human mandible contained two visible teeth, a molar and premolar, which were examined and measured in order to determine the individual's age at death. This was estimated as 25-28 years. The condition of the humerus fragment was consistent with this age. It could not be determined whether the small shell-filled pit represented the final stage of a mortuary ritual, or an intrusive pit excavated when the presence of the grave was no longer remembered. In any case, the oyster shells likely had a preservative effect. Considering the predominance of Yeocomico ware in the ceramic assemblage from nearby units, it appeared probable that the interment occurred between AD 1500 and 1630.

To better understand the dating of the burial feature, charcoal fragments derived from the lower part of the overlying shell pit were submitted for radiocarbon dating. The uncalibrated date attained for the sample was 470 ± 80 radiocarbon years before present. When calibrated, this translates to a calendrical date range of AD 1303 to 1635, a good match for the established dates for Yeocomico pottery.

Flotation samples from the two prehistoric features were analyzed for their ethnobotanical remains. The non-charcoal ethnobotanical assemblage from the prehistoric features included 5 hickory/walnut shells, a cherry/plum pit, and an unidentified grass seed.

Upon recognition of the human identity of the bone fragments, excavation was stopped. The mandible and a humerus fragment found to the north of it were left in situ. Smaller fragments of human bone that had been removed in excavation of the feature were wrapped in foil and placed close to the mandible. A small piece of flagging tape was placed above the mandible to clearly demarcate its position if the area should be re-exposed. The human remains were then covered with clean white sand and plastic sheeting was placed on top of the sand.

Because of the likelihood that more of the skeleton might be located close to the feature, and the possibility of encountering additional burials in the vicinity,



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planned additional mechanical excavation in the ravine area was cancelled. In consultation with the Navy and two modern Native American groups linguistically and culturally related to the historical Patuxent tribe, the decision was made to leave the human remains in place and alter the Navy's construction plans for the area.

Prehistoric artifacts (excluding human remains) recovered during Phase III work at 18CV362 include 431 flaked stone objects, 4 cobble chopper tools, 13 hammerstones, a nutting stone, 209 pieces of fire-cracked rock, 583 ceramic sherds, and 157 prehistoric faunal remains. The flaked stone objects include a Bare Island or Calvert point, a Piscataway point, a Levanna point, 3 non-diagnostic tools, 7 cores, 4 utilized flakes, 286 flakes, 94 pieces of shatter, and 34 tested pebbles. Quartz was by-far the most common raw material in the lithic assemblage, with lesser amounts of other materials. The ceramic assemblage included at least 583 sherds, including 548 Yeocomico (3 rims), 2 Rappahannock Fabric-Impressed, 2 Townsend Cord-marked (both rims), 2 Sullivan, 1 Moyaone, 2 Mockley, 1 Popes Creek, 1 Stoney Creek, and 24 other sherds. The faunal assemblage included at least 74 pieces of oyster shell, 46 bird bones, a raccoon bone, 3 squirrel bones, 6 turtle carapace/plastron pieces, a bullfrog bone, 12 medium-large mammal bones, 4 small mammal bones, and 10 unidentified bones.

Based on the results of Phase I, II, and III excavations at 18CV362, the site can be characterized as a multi-component prehistoric hamlet and shell midden, and a mid 17th to early 18th century domestic site. Both major components (prehistoric and historic) include intact artifact deposits and features, demonstrating significance capable of answering ongoing research questions related to Maryland prehistory and history.

Initial plans for the site anticipated removal of the site location and the bluff above the Patuxent in order to utilize the sand and gravel contained within the sediments at the site in the construction of protective groins that were proposed to protect the shoreline. After discovery of the human remains at the site, those plans were altered. The project as-built was able to obtain construction material for the groins from a source off-site, and thus the cultural remains of 18CV362 were not affected by the project and have been preserved in situ. The river bluff has been modified by the addition of protective vegetation and through a reduction in the angle, or steepness, of the slope. The site is presently preserved and maintained by NRC Solomons as a grassy lawn overlooking the Patuxent River. Public outreach was also undertaken to display sample artifacts from the site at the nearby Calvert Maritime Museum in Solomons Island and with interpretive wayside markers at the site itself.

External Reference Codes (Library ID Numbers):

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